

OUR DEDICATED STAFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, staff are the backbone of this institution. In fact, the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, over the course of the last few weeks, has had hearings specifically related to how this institution can recruit, retain, and have more diverse staffs.

The staffs who work in Congress are dedicated public servants who are here because they want to do meaningful work for our country. Today, I want to rise to say thank you to some very talented and very special staffers who were instrumental to the success of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress in the 116th Congress: Allie Neill, Jake Olson, Danielle Stewart, Mariah Harding, and SoRelle Gaynor.

As chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, I was fortunate to have Ms. Neill and Mr. Olson at the helm leading our staff and guiding our members through an incredibly productive 2 years. Their dedication to our bipartisan mission along with their institutional expertise was critical to the committee's success. To their credit, when they came in to do the work of our committee, they weren't wearing red jerseys or blue jerseys. They were wearing jerseys that said: Let's try to make Congress work better for the American people.

On top of that, Ms. Stewart did an extraordinary job of amplifying the work of our committee and sharing it with the American people. Ms. Harding handled the critical behind-the-scenes work like a pro. Under Ms. Gaynor's direction the committee produced an outstanding final report for the 116th Congress.

These staffers exemplify public service at its finest, and I want to rise today to thank them for their contributions.

THE RACIST LEFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, racism is the practice of according rights and privileges to an individual not based on equality under the law, but, rather, according to what race that person was born. It is antithetical to every principle our country was founded upon, from the promise of our Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal to the equal protection clause of our Constitution. It was a malignancy we fought a civil war to remove. For generations, it has been denounced by every American of goodwill for the evil that it is.

Yet, this dangerous social pathology is now rampant in this House. The Ju-

diciary Committee recently adopted a measure on a party-line vote to establish a commission with the avowed purpose of enshrining racism into law under the guise of slavery reparations.

The biased composition of this commission—there is not a single Republican appointment—lays its intent bare for all to see. It is designed to reach into the dead past, revive its most malevolent conflicts, and reintroduce them into our age.

I cannot imagine a more divisive, polarizing, or unjust measure than one that would use government force to require people who never owned slaves to pay reparations to people who never were slaves—based not on anything they did, but solely because of what race they were born.

History offers us an inexhaustible supply of grievances and injustices that are powerful enough to stoke hatreds and resentments that can tear any society apart. That is what this movement is all about. It is evil in its effect, if not in its intent.

Lincoln often pointed out that our country was born into a world where slavery was an established institution. The American Founders reviled it, and they placed principles in our founding documents that they were confident would ultimately place that wicked institution upon the course of ultimate extinction and would lead to a republic where men and women of every race and background could, together, enjoy the blessings of liberty. Equal justice under law means a colorblind society where race simply becomes irrelevant, and until recently, we had made tremendous progress toward that vision as a nation.

Martin Luther King expressed the gold standard of racial harmony: that we should be judged by the content of our character and not the color of our skin. It is the equal protection of the law and the vision of a colorblind society stretching from the American Founders to Lincoln and King that is now under attack by the racist left.

Yes, there are racists in our society. There are racists of all colors in every society; it is the baser side of human nature. But no nation has struggled harder to transcend that nature and isolate and marginalize its racists than have Americans.

Yes, extremely damaging and foolish policies have disproportionately impacted Black communities in recent decades. Union-dominated schools that have failed to educate our children in inner cities, welfare programs that have destroyed families, and the withdrawal of police protection from crime-plagued neighborhoods are certainly among them. But these policies devastate every community where they are practiced, regardless of race. The answer is to change those policies, not to excuse them because they are ideologically pleasing to the left.

The racist left is content to ignore all of these current ills. It, instead, attempts to set neighbor against neigh-

bor and American against American on the basis of their race. They say this is healing. It is precisely the opposite. They know it. Indeed, they count on it.

I think all Americans of goodwill and of every race and creed have had enough of this. We are tired of seeing our children taught to hate themselves and to hate each other. We are tired of seeing our country demonized as racist by those whose first and solitary focus is on race. We are tired of the lie that our Nation is systemically racist when it has done more to produce a civil and tolerant multiracial society than any people in the history of civilization.

It is long past time that every American of every heritage denounces this evil for what it is and to extirpate from our civil discourse those race-baiters of every persuasion who have polluted our national dialogue and corrupted our national heritage.

PROTECT THE RAIZAL PEOPLE OF THE SAN ANDRES ARCHIPELAGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have very strong views about the national protest taking place across Colombia over the past 2 weeks and the absolutely brutal response against the demonstrators by the Colombian public security forces.

But today, I rise about a very different and specific human rights crisis in Colombia, one that receives little attention in the United States and from the international community. I am speaking about the plight of the Raizal people who have lived for centuries on the islands that make up the San Andres archipelago.

The Raizal are descendants of Pilgrim settlers, enslaved Africans, Amer-Indians, and British emigrants. They speak Creole English, and most are Protestants.

However, in a twist of fate characteristic of the history of colonization, the islands on which they live—San Andres, Ketlina, and Old Providence—are under the sovereignty of Colombia, whose population is Spanish speaking and largely Catholic. It has been that way since the 1800s.

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For a long time, the Raizal were left largely to their own devices. They were self-governed with a self-sustaining economy.

But in the 1950s, the Colombian Government decided to strengthen control over the islands by promoting tourism and mass migration from the mainland. The result is that San Andres, the largest of the islands, is extremely overpopulated. The Raizal have been reduced to minority status on that island. And the development for tourism has so seriously damaged the pristine environment that UNESCO tried to protect it by declaring it a biosphere reserve in 2000.